

1-35 ARMOR

Iron Thunder 2001

back to basics



which allows crews to go through actual tank gunnery qualification. The final qualification is Table 8.

Table 8 is a series of day and night, stationary and moving, targeting scenarios which challenges a tank crew to quickly acquire the target, make positive identification and then destroy it. The scoring for Table 8 is based on a 1,000-point system. The crews are graded on quickness and accuracy of response, as well as the use of proper fire and maneuver command and execution of those commands.

"Table 8 lets our higher command know the readiness level of each qualified tank crew member and our ability to answer the call to war," said Takacs. "Gunnery makes us confident in our equipment and ourselves. It gives us the confidence to go out and do what we do best: kill targets."

But firing and qualifying an M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank is only the icing on the cake for an armored battalion. Behind the scenes, mechanics keep the 68 tons of hulking

metal rolling, and communications equipment specialists keep tankers chatting over Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio Systems.

"The job of tankers is to shoot, move and communicate," said Spc. Jeremy Baker, Abrams systems tank mechanic assigned to Co. A, 1-35 AR. "Our job is to keep them moving." Baker said there is a great sense of teamwork and appreciation for each other in Company A.

"You feel the appreciation of the tankers when you keep them

up and running," explained Baker. He related how the tankers provide a helping hand to mechanics, while the mechanics work on the tanks. "The tankers show a lot of teamwork. They tell us things like, 'We'll take care of guard duty; you guys just fix our tanks.' We put in a lot of late hours, but with a team like Alpha, things come together."

The communications equipment specialists also know what bringing people together is all about.

"Communications is of number one importance," said Sgt. James Martinez, a signal support systems specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-35 AR. The importance of

communications was echoed by Sgt. Scott James, the communications section chief for 1-35 AR.

"Communication in any unit is a vital part of the wartime effort, but being in a maneuver unit, I've learned my job 10 times better. We use our skills a lot," explained James.

Whether it's pulling the trigger and unleashing one of the world's most powerful anti-armor rounds, replacing 1,500 horsepower diesel turbine engines or providing clear channels of communication, the soldiers of 1-35 AR believe in teamwork to get the job done.

"It all ties together," said Takacs. "The tankers, mechanics and commo guys all work together to make it happen. One shot, one kill."



Above: 1st Sgt. David A. Takacs of Co. A, 1-35 AR, peers through binoculars at tanks firing on Table 8. Takacs served as "Beachmaster" during the gunnery, directing the order of fire and safety procedures on the range. Right: Tankers from Co. A, 1-35 Armor, download high explosive anti-tank (HEAT) rounds. Far Right: Tankers verify bore scope readings prior to firing on Table 8.

Note: 1st Armored Division's 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, is stationed in Baumholder, Germany.